



## **Introduction**

The purpose of this Collection Development Policy is to guide the selection of library materials and inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made. The “Library Bill of Rights,” as adopted by the American Library Association, and the “Freedom to Read Statement,” issued jointly by the American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers (included in the Appendix) underpin the policy.

## **Our Mission**

Provide free and equal access to information, ideas, books and technology to educate, engage, and enrich the Stamford community.

## **Our Vision**

Inspire lifelong learning and personal growth.

## **Our Core Values**

Literacy: Nurture and encourage literacy and inspire a love of reading through programs, services, and materials.

Life-long Learning: Provide educational opportunities for all ages to improve quality of life and support the skills needed in the home, school, and workplace.

Atmosphere: Create a safe, inviting, and comfortable environment that is conducive to reading, studying, learning, and engagement.

Access: Provide convenient hours and locations for the Stamford community and remote access via our website.

Accountability: Provide excellent customer service through delivery of the quality resources needed by our users.

Connections: Build relationships among and between individuals and community groups.

Innovation: Encourage experimentation, creativity, and artistic expression through current technologies as well as traditional programs and materials.

Diversity: Embrace the numerous cultures and races in the community.

Equality: Promote freedom from bias and favoritism.

Intellectual Freedom: Facilitate the free exchange of information and ideas.



## **About the Library and its Community**

Since it first opened its doors at the end of the 19th century, The Ferguson Library has been the heart of the Stamford community, a place of learning and education, a gathering place where people could meet and exchange ideas. As Stamford grew and changed, The Ferguson Library grew along with it. In 1911, The Ferguson became a free public library, embracing the concept that knowledge should be available to all, regardless of ability to pay.

The Main Library (DiMattia Building) is open seven days a week. It is located in the heart of downtown Stamford in a 1909 building that underwent a top-to-bottom renovation in 2010. The collections in this facility are extensive and serve as the backbone of the whole system. A new materials room off the lobby features new books and DVDS, and offers a light-filled space to browse or read. Our Youth Services Department is housed on both the first floor and lower levels, with large collections and technology stations for children and teens. The Main Library's second floor is our dedicated research floor, and includes the Technology Hub as well as research guides and other special collections.

The Harry Bennett Branch, located in North Stamford, has popular titles in many formats for children, teens and adults. The branch has internet and research workstations throughout, as well as preschool computer terminals and a carpeted story circle for children's programs. The Harry Bennett Branch offers programming for children, teens and adults, including a popular monthly book discussion series.

The Weed Memorial & Hollander Branch, located in a renovated 19th century farmhouse, is the hub of the Springdale neighborhood, within walking distance for many residents. In addition to its collection of books and other materials for children and adults, Weed sponsors many popular programs, such as preschool storytimes and adult book discussions. Springdale school children frequently visit the branch on field trips, and the cozy fireplace room is a popular spot on cold winter days.

The South End Branch, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2020, is located in the Lathon Wider Community Center in Stamford's South End, a fast-growing, changing neighborhood. The branch serves a diverse community, which includes many recent immigrants, and has an eclectic, culturally diverse collection, including Spanish language, and French/Creole materials, self-help materials, popular reading and children's books. South End offers many educational and recreational programs, including parent/child workshops, Homework Cafe, music and cultural programs and a long-running adult book discussion that focuses on African and African-American authors.

Ferguson Library's travelling Branch, The Bookmobile, brings library services to the entire Stamford community, with regularly scheduled stops at child care centers, senior housing,



parks, shopping centers, and neighborhoods. The Bookmobile collection includes both adult and children's materials.

### **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

The library embraces diversity, equity, and racial understanding and utilizes the lens of EDI (equity, diversity and inclusion) when purchasing materials of all formats to our collection.

### **The Collection**

#### **Formats**

The Library refrains from purchasing unusual formats designed for the home market, including write-in workbooks, multi-part or spiral binding publications with pull-out pages, and miniature gift books.

#### **Digital Materials**

The Library's digital media collections provide access through a variety of commonly used android and IOS devices, and through a variety of downloadable formats such as ePub, Kindle, PDF, and MP3 audio file or music file. The Library also subscribes to movie streaming services that allow users to stream feature films, TV shows, and documentary and educational content.

Materials available through these digital collections are not always curated by the Library but may be curated by a third party vendor.

#### **Non-print materials**

Physical non-print materials remain popular with the Library's users. To fill the demand, the Library continues to purchase films in DVD and Blu-ray format, audiobooks on compact disc and Playaway format, and music on compact disc. Older formats like VHS, audiocassette, reel-to-reel tape, and LP recording are not owned or collected by the Library.

### **Adult Collections**

Titles are typically selected from professional review journals, but other criteria include the reputation of the author and publisher, book award winners, local interest, and appropriateness to the Library's users. The goal is to create a comprehensive collection that mirrors the diverse interests of the Stamford community with respect to cultural background, educational level, taste, and reading ability. Books are purchased in hardcover as well as in trade and mass market paperback. Titles in large print format are also acquired to meet the needs of lower-vision users.

#### **Fiction**



The Library purchases a wide variety of contemporary fiction works including bestsellers, literary fiction, mysteries, science fiction, fantasy, short story collections, and adult graphic novels. Library staff are aware of community demand for popular reading and select titles based on that criteria, acquiring multiple copies as needed. In addition, the Library offers a large number of literary classics which are in demand by students as well as general adult readers.

### **Non-Fiction**

The Library maintains an in-depth collection of non-fiction works, currently reflecting the subject areas expressed through the Dewey Decimal classification scheme. This form of classification is under consideration for future modification and/or alteration for increased equity, accessibility and discoverability. We select materials appropriate for a general public library audience, as opposed to scholarly or esoteric works. Some of the more popular subject areas include biography, health, childcare, cooking, business and technology, travel, history, true crime, home improvement, politics and world affairs, and test preparation.

### **World Languages**

World languages collections support recent immigrants, international students, and the general public.

Materials published in languages other than English are purchased by The Ferguson Library in response to local demographics, demonstrated need, and popular demand. Consideration is given to materials (books, periodicals, film, and music) in various languages that reflect the ethnic diversity of the community. The most popular languages include Spanish, Russian, Haitian Creole, French, Polish, and Chinese.

Ferguson Library staff monitor current demographic data and try to develop collections of additional languages (such as Arabic and Hindi) for newer, growing populations. In order to determine how to best meet the informational and recreational needs of the community, the library will use various assessment tools including census data, surveys, customer registration data, customer requests, and data from other community groups. The Library is committed to a flexible, evolving, and ongoing assessment process. Languages may be added or dropped from the collection as community needs dictate.

The World Language collection contains bestselling original language authors, as well as translated works by famous classic and contemporary authors. Additionally, the general public uses the wider World Language collections for lifelong learning, travel and recreation purposes, and more recently to gain a greater understanding of the cultures of our recent immigrant and refugee communities. The collections also provide materials for customer's fluent in more than one language wishing to retain that fluency.

Language learning materials, dictionaries, and literary and cultural resources are collected to support the educational and informational needs of our users. Professional librarians with



foreign language expertise are assigned to the management of the collections. The Library relies on professional review sources for each subject area and format within the collection.

For each language collection, we have also selected ESL (English as a Second Language) materials to accommodate customer needs. Priority is generally given to American publications and material with an audio-visual component and covers a range of areas, including dictionaries and items dealing with grammar, punctuation, spelling, writing composition, and numeracy.

### **Local History & Genealogy**

The task of the librarian charged with this collection is to identify, acquire, and preserve research materials related to local, state, and regional history and genealogy. The Stamford Room, located on the second floor of the Main Library, houses work on Stamford and Connecticut history in addition to municipal documents, historical maps and atlases, old city directories, genealogical manuscripts, and biographies of prominent people of Stamford and Connecticut.

The library has two large collections of early Stamford photographs, donated by Charles Kurz and Carl Loboza. Mounted and labeled photographs are available for public viewing with special permission. Indexed photocopies of the photos are located at the second floor Information Desk. These photographs are now available through the Ferguson Library Digital Archive. Also available for view is the extensive collection of materials published by Stamford's Overbrook Press from 1934 to 1969.

The Library also owns a collection of microfilm with US Census records, vital, church and cemetery records, city directories (1879 to 1966), and school yearbooks for limited years.

### **Government Documents - Federal/State/City- Municipal/Judicial**

#### *Federal Deposit Library Program*

Approximately 20% of the materials we receive from the Government Printing Office are in physical formats. The other 80% are online. All federal documents, including physical materials and relevant electronic content such as e-books and websites, appear in the public catalog and can be located through a simple search. The Ferguson Library's government documents librarian is responsible for the selection of all materials through lists provided by the GPO.

#### *Connecticut State Library.*

State documents are filed and displayed by agency/topic. They get removed once a year or replaced if there is similar information that is more up-to-date. We get a *Connecticut Practice Book*, the *Connecticut Statutes*, the *Connecticut State Manual and Register*. These books are catalogued and filed in Ready Reference on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Documents are kept for five years or until updated. Books of a greater importance are kept 10 years and filed in the Stamford Room.



### *City of Stamford Documents*

A collection that includes both print and digital formats. Digital documents and archives are found on the Library's local resources page. Print documents can be found in various sections of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Charter, real estate, agency communications, budgets are the types of documents collected.

### **Digital/Electronic Resources Collection**

The Library collects electronic resources according to the general selection criteria. In addition, criteria specific to electronic formats are applied. The Library reserves the right to decline including materials/resources that don't meet the general collection development policy selection criteria.

Methods of evaluation include comparisons to similar products, demonstrations, literature reviews, and peer consultation.

### **Library Website**

E-resources that do not require subscriptions and licensing agreements may be added to the collection provided they support the educational and information needs of our users.

Library staff may recommend external website links, including government, non-profit and commercial websites, which feature reliable sources and provide valuable content. Non-library parties may suggest or request links, but inclusion and placement of all external links will be carefully evaluated and selected by staff on the basis of the following criteria:

Are deemed to be of interest and value to our customers

Contain up-to-date, reliable, authoritative information

From non-profit, government, or reputable commercial entities that do not charge for access and support the Library's mission and values

Any requests from the public or other organizations for third-party or reciprocal links will be evaluated by staff using the criteria above.

Websites that advertise a service or product, promote hate speech, or a particular religious or political agenda will not be considered.

### **Digital Archives**

The Library scans and digitizes a variety of hardcopy documents and makes them available electronically through our webpage. These documents may include images such as photographs and drawings; maps; books and booklets; manuscripts; broadsides; letters; and printed ephemera. The documents come from the Library's own collections and are selected



for inclusion based on community interest. Popular topics include Stamford and Connecticut history, Stamford urban renewal and regional planning materials, and genealogy of local families. Suitability for digitization is evaluated in terms of image quality and physical condition.

Oral history interviews, recorded by library staff in the form of audio or video files, may also be included in the Digital Archives.

The Library provides electronic versions of materials from its collections for personal use by the public. We do not give legal advice as to whether any particular use would infringe upon the intellectual property rights of the person or organization that created the original documents.

### **Makerspace and Other Technology**

In an effort to reduce digital inequity, the library makerspace and technology center circulates maker equipment that customers might find useful, and which can be used for trial and experimentation. The Library currently lends out Raspberry Pis, Arduino kits, ukuleles, household tool kits and a sewing machine. More items will be added based on funding, trend and community need.

### **Youth Services**

The Youth Services Department offers developmentally appropriate materials that meet the informational, recreational, and cultural needs of children and young adults ages birth through 18. The same criteria listed for selection of adult resources apply to materials for youth. The content, style, format, and appeal to children and teens are taken into consideration. Resources (which include print books, e-books, audiobooks, DVDs, and music) are selected to serve children of all reading, listening and viewing levels. It also serves parents, teachers and other adults working with and interested in children and their literature. The collection is responsive to local school assignments, providing resources which supplement the curriculum and summer reading lists. A selection of resources in languages other than English is also included. To ensure that all parts of the collection are appropriate and well-chosen, youth services librarians consult professional review sources before purchase, but also take recommendations of library users into consideration.

Some materials in the Youth Services Collection might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all children of every age. Use of Library resources by children is the responsibility of their parents or guardians. Selections shall not be inhibited by the possibility that resources may come into the hands of children.



Major factors that influence the selection of materials for youth (which include print books, e-books, audiobooks, DVDs, and music) are:

- Content
- Authority
- Literacy merit, artistic quality, originality, and creativity
- Accuracy, objectivity, clarity, logic, and effectiveness of material
- Relevance to the needs of the community
- Current interest in subject matter
- Local interest in subject or author
- Popular demand
- Limits of space and funds

### **Self-Published, gift books and requests for consideration**

The Ferguson Library often receives donations of independently written and/or published material for inclusion in the library catalog. Materials such as these will have a higher chance of being acquired if they are reviewed professionally by the following journals that specialize in independently published materials: Foreword, Independent Publisher, and Small Press Review. A review by any of the following national review sources would also increase the likelihood of the item being added to the library catalog: Booklist, Kirkus Reviews, Library Journal, Publisher's Weekly, or School Library Journal.

Customer's suggestion for material can be placed and will be reviewed in a timely fashion. All requests are given thoughtful consideration. If the item has mass appeal and/or well reviewed in industry publications, the title is added. The Library makes all attempts to purchase items suggested by our customers.

### **Collection Maintenance**

Library materials in all formats reflect contemporary interest, trend and timeliness. Materials are deaccessioned if information is expired or no longer current. Items are also removed from the collection if they have not circulated for a period of years or no longer reflect current mores and values.

### **Request for Reconsideration of Materials**

Library users requesting reconsideration and removal of items in the collection may submit a Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form, which is available at any library location. Staff review the request in relation to the Library's mission and selection



criteria and present their recommendation to the Library President, who reviews the request and replies to the user within thirty days of receipt of the request. The item remains in the collection during the reconsideration process.

## **Appendix**

### **Library Bill of Rights**

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, age, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019. Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.



## **The Freedom to Read Statement**

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our



culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.



7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

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This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

*A Joint Statement by:*

[American Library Association](#)  
[Association of American Publishers](#)

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

[American Booksellers for Free Expression](#)  
[The Association of American University Presses](#)  
[The Children's Book Council](#)  
[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)



[National Association of College Stores](#)

[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)

[National Council of Teachers of English](#)

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression